

¶ Here begynneth the history of the va-

lyent knyght, Syr Ikenbras.



THE BRITISH MUSEUM





Wherages then, as you may here
Of eldys that before vs were
that lyued in lande and dede
Jesu Christ heauen kynge

Grant them all his dere blessinge
And heauen to their mede
ye shall well heare of a knight
that was in warre full myght
And daughter of his dede
Hys name was Syr Ikenbras
Man nobler then he was
Lyued none with breade
He was lyuely, large and longe
With shoulders broade, and armes stronge
that myghtie was to fe
He was a hardy man and hye
All men hym loved that hym se
For a gentyll knyght was he
Harpers loved him in hall
With other minstrels all
For he gatte them golde and fee
He was as curtoise as men might thinke
Lyberall of meate and drynke
In the worlde was none so free
He had a lady full of beautye
And also full of charitie
As any lady might be
Betwene them they had chyldren thre
Fayrer ladies myght no man se
Under the cope of heauen
For worldly welth, and pryde he sell

On God he thought he met a dell
How onghostly thrunge
So longe he stuned in that pryde
No longer woulde our Lorde abyde
So after it befell on a daye
that this knyght wente hym to playe
Hys focest for to se
As he loked vp on hye
He sawe an aungell in the skye
which toward hym dyd flye
Then bras he sarde there
thou hast forgotten what thou were
For pryde and golde and see
Therefore our lorde sayth to thee so
All thy good thou muste forgo
as thou shalt here after se
The worldes welth shall fro the fall
thou shalt lose thy chyl dren all
And all thy landes free
thy lady goodfrest of all
For feare of fyre shall flye thy hall
this daye or thou her se
The knyght fell doune vpon his kne
Underneath an Olyue tre
And helde vp both his handes
and then agayne thus sayde he
Lorde God in trinitie
Welcome be thy sountes
whyle I am yenge, I maye well go
when I am olde, I maye not so
Though that I saye woulde

Therefore

Therefore I pray thee
In youth send me aduersitie
And not when I am olde
The aungel toke fro thence his flight
And left alone that carefull knyght
From hym he wente his waye
When the aungell was passe his sight
His strange siede that was so wight
Dead vnder hym laye
His harkes and houndes that he fed
they wasted and were all deade
They brought to hym no pray
Home on fote he muste gone
the teares fell from his chekes anone
Out of his eyen grave
Homewarde anone he can wende
There met he with his meryn hende
Before hym on a rowe
Say they sayde we tell you playne
with aduers all youre belles ben slaine
with venyme are they blowe
The h ormes your capons hath you berefte
the thunder hath you no beaileste
for to put in your ploughe
they wepte sore with semblant yll
Say I sen as hade them be syl
I blame you not of this wo
for he that sende me all this wo
he maye sende me mirthes mo
And shall do well ynoughe
Let your sorowe all cease

Enforce your selfe to gaine peace
And mery as birde on bowe
He went forth wo bestad
there met he wth a lytle lad
That camer ennyng hym againe
Well worse he hym tolde
Brent hym all thy bowres holde
Many of thy men be slayne
There is nothyng left on lyue
But thy chyldren and thy wyfe
they fled for fere of fyre
Quod Hembraz so mote I thynke
For these tydynges also blyue
I geue thee all that I were
His purse calle he to hym belyue
the lady hym thanked often fythe
For his gifte so great
the knyght vnto the towne went
He sawe his place was all to brent
Lowe and playne with the strete
A dolofull sight than gan he se
Hys wyfe and his chyldren thre
Out of the fyre were fled
there they late vnder a thorne
Bare ad naked as they wer borne
Brought out of theyr bed
A woful man than was he
whan he them sawe all naked be
the lady sayde also blyue
For nothyng syr be ye a drabe
Dedyd of his surcote of pallade

and

Wyle and his chylde
They that ere had welth and wyth
the harde hunger that they were
Great sorowe it was
In a for...

...the they were a wyle
Howe myght they get none tyle
wery and wa they were
The dayes were come and gone
Eate nor drynke founde they none
The chyldezen wept so fre
They eate nothyng that came of corne
But beryes and bowes of the thorne
Amonge the boltes bare
they came to a water by dene
Ouer woulde they layne haue bene
Then begane they care
His eldest sonne he toke theare
And ouer the water dyd hym beare
And set hym vnder a bulke of brome
He sayde sonne wepe no more
Tyll I for thy bretheren fare
I lay thee with a brome
the knyght toke a pace full good
And faste serped ouer the flood
His myddle sonne he namde
And bare hym ouer the water wilde
A Lyon toke his eldest chylde
O he to the lande come
the knyght neuer the later
Into the wylde water
turned agayne that daye

A leopard

A Leopard came and took the other
The chylde that was the myde brother
And with hym wente awaye
The lady cried loude and myll
Loth she was her lyfe to myll
On lande there she laye
The knyght had this lady be myll
He shall do after gods myll
For sorowe they hartes were sore
Then both the chylzen losse were
Hys louely sonnes two
This lady was wonte to ryde in a chaire
On his backe he her oute bare
His yonge sonne also
thorough a forreste dayes thre
They went towarde the quicke see
wonders wery and wo
As they stode on the lande
They sawe come sayhyng by the see lande
thre hundred shyppes and mo
And as they on the lande stode
they loked farther in the flode
Baleys they sawe come glyde
With topcastels lyfte on losse
With streamers of sendale softe
Lyke a prynce proude of pryde
In theythen kynge was therein
That christendome was come to wyn
the Soudan he woulde lande
Up in an haven at the woddes ende
The knyght he sounde that tyde

11
Hys Sarafyns all by hys lyde
Many men sawe he rene and ryde
He sayde vnto his ladye fre
What men are these thynke ye
I heare a myghty steuen
Throug this forest haue we gone
Meate nor drynke found we none
Of all these dayes seuen
Go we and aske them some meate
If that we maye any gette
For goddes loue of heauen
Toward the galley gan they gone
Ther in sat the sowdan
In medes worthely wrought
He asked of them lyues gode
For his love that dyed on the rode
And made this worlde of nought
Whan the kynge herde hym crye
Southly he sayde he is a spyre
That thus sacre hath vs sought
I byd you bete hym awaye
For they beleue not on our laye
Of me get they ryght nought
A knyght kneled before the kynge
And sayd it is a pytfull thyng
That poore penaunce tose
He semeth a man so gentyll and fre
Though he be in necessitie
It is ruth and pytie
His eyen are gray as any glasse
Where he as well fedde as euer he was

Like a might youde he be
Hys wyfe as whyte as whales bone
though she with weping be ouergone
She is as white as blosome on tre
the sowdan sayde, and him bethaughte
Let them before me be brought
I will them se with sighte
whan he them sawe his heart was dere
so worthy as they both were
That they ne were clathed a righte
than dyd the sowdan to hym saye
Man wilt thou beleue on my laye
and with me go to fyghte
Forlake thy Christendome for aye
and beleue on Mahoundes laye
and then I wyll doubbe the a knyghte
Styll stode sy? I sen bras
And sawe a sowdan that he was
than sayde he playnly naye
I shall neuer bee hethen bounde become
Nor warre againste Christendome
therfore to dye thys daye
Greate wayes we haue to gone
Greate ne drynke haue we none
Repenye for to paye
sy? helpe vs to our lyues fode
For hys loue that dyed on rode
and let vs walke a waye
the sowdan sawe the ladye there
He thought an aungell that she were
that had bene in heauen

B.ii.

De

And I wpll geue the golde and fe
More than thou cane meane
I wpll geue thee an hundzeth pounde
Of fayre florence rede and rounde
And red robes seven
She shalbe quene of all my lande
And all my men to serue to her hande
No man withstande her steuen
Spz I senbras sayde naye
My wyfe wpll I not sell awaye
thy men shall spz me no
I wedded her as I you saye
To holde her to my endinge daye
Both in wele and in wo
And hundzeth pound of fayre florence
the Sowdan layde in his presence
And let hys wyfe hym fro
The golde agayne spz I senbras caste
therfore his ribes was nere hande brass
And made his body all blo
asone after as he myght stande
He toke hys sonne by the hande
A soye man was he
than was the maner there
with oyes and acres for to fare
with that lady so free
The Sowdane with his owne hande
Crouned her quene of Surrpe lande
And sent her ouer the see
to her the crowne thus he hande.

Though I come neuer to thee
When the tyme was redy there
Wyth theyr fraught awaye to fare
The ladye fell on her knee
Syr Sowdan she sayde thare
For her loue that Iesu bare
A bowne graunt y me
Geue me leue with my lorde
That I might speake one worde
Aboute a pryncesse thynge
The Sowdan called hym agayne
Therof was the ladye fayne
Her token was a rynge
There was ioye to se them mete
With kissinge & with clypping sweete
To tyme when she was go
She sayde alas wo is me
That I ne droune in the see
Shall we departe in two
In that lande that I am in
If that ye come it for to wyn
The Sowdan wyll I do
Syr ye shall be kynge with crowne
ouer castell, towre and towne
And recouer all your wo
Meate and drinke she dyd hym geue
ther wyth a seven nyght for telyue
Hys yonge sonne and he
Then this ladye meke and myde
Kysed hym, and than her chyld

Then folowed the tymes thre
they drew vpon sayle of bright herte
The wynde them soone to surp blete
the knyght hym on the lande set
He syghed and wepte with teares great
whyle he the sayle myght se
He toke his sonne by the hande
And forth he went vpon the lande
amonge the holtes bye
He swarmed vpon into a tree
whyle eyther of them might other se
tho were there hertes sore
Meate and drynke forth he drew
and gaue his yonge sonne ynowe
That was an hungred sore
In the mantell amonge the breade
He layed his gold that was so reade
and with hym he it bare
Then he came to an hyl full hye
there he thought all night to lye
farther go he ne might
On the morow tohan it was daye
An Eagle hath the golde awaye
For the read clothes syghte
Isenbras than a waked he
and folowed the fowle to the grekes 3re
there gan the fowle ouer flee
O he returned, an Unicorn
the yonge chylde awaye had borne
Amonge the holtes bye
the knyghte afore was often wo

Buc

But neuer then he was the
He set hym on a stone
For he sayde wo is me
For my wyfe and my chyldren thre
Nowe am I left alone
The kyng that bare of thorne the croune
Wylde me a waye vnto the towne
For all amysse haue I gone
He ne wist what he do might
But for sorowe he sore syght
With mournynge made his mone
Alone he walked by a lowe
A fayre fyre sawe he glowe
He prayed the of breade for charitie
They sayde labour for so do we
We haue none other plowe
Who answered the knyghte agayne
So so wyl I certayne
Faste he bare and faste he drowe
They taught hym to turne the stone
and bade hym speede that he had done
Than had he shame ynowe
This man toke labour hym vpon
Tyll the fyre was gone
For his lypynge wrought he so
By that tyme coude he make a fyre
And toke he mannes hyre
For he wrought more than two
all the longe seven yere
A smythes manne was he there
and yet thre monethes to

By that he had hym armure byght
All that longed to a knyght
to the water with hym to go
That seven yere I vnderstande
the Sowdan was in chrysten lande
Tyll they puruayed a battayll stronge
the Sarasyns to abyde
A daye of battayle there was set
where both chrysten and heythen met
A lyttell there besyde
In the same armure & Ilenbras wroughte
And on a croked caple that coles broughte
Hym selfe to battayle gan ryde
He rode vnder an hyll so hye
Chrysten and heythen both he se
that the two knynges had brought
The hofle was arayed in royall araye
taboures and trumpettes herde he play
And launces lifte on lofte
Syr Ilenbras with hert fre
Set hym doune vpon his kne
In Iesu was his thought
to sende hym grace in that felde
That false Sowdan for to yelde
for the wo that he hym wrought
Syr Ilenbras anke vp stode
Byght eger was he of mode
Soze dintes he gatte certayne
It sprange as sparcle out of fynte
there myght no man withstande his dynte
tyll hys caple was slayne

nohan

An earle out of the batayle hym brought
Upon an hygh mountayne
This earle there chaunged his wede
And set hym on a good slede
Than wente he fast agayne
The stronge slede he gan ascende
In to the hoaste than gan tye
There delte he denges fore
He selled all that before hym stode
And those that he knocked on the hode
He slewe for evermore
He rode vp to the hygh mountayne
The Sowdan he had slayne
And many that with hym were
all the daye lasted that fight
By: Alenbras that noble knyght
When the batayle there
The chyllern kynge was full fayne
When the Sowdan was slayne
With Sarasins great plenty
He sayde whence is that noble knyght
that all this folke hath slayne in syghte
Right sayne woulde I hym se
Knyghtes here sone he sought
And at the laste he was forth brought
Soze wounded was he
What arte thou sayde the kynge than
By: quod he a myghes man
to defende thee in syghte
Thou shalt he sayde haue meat and drynke
the

11
till thou haue recovered myght
The kynge sware by this lyght
When thy woundes whole be
I shall thee make a knyght
In a newe they dyd hym leaue
To heale his woundes that dyd hym greue
that he had in fyght
The Nonnes of hym were full fayne
Because he had the Sowdan slayne
With many a Heathen hounde
On his sorowe they can rewe
And every day with hys salues newe
To heale therewith his woundes
they intreated hym curteously
So he was healed lightly
Within a lytle sounde
He betought hym full well
That no longer he woulde there dwell
When he was whole and sounde
He purueyed hym scrip and pyke
And made hym selfe palmer lyke
Ready for to wende
He toke his leaue withouten lesse
Fayre thanking the prioressse
With all the Nonnes hende
The ryght way than toke he
till he came to the quicke see
With scripe and burdon blyue
A chyppe founde he ready there
Into Acres for to fare

thethe

Whither can they ryue
When they had accres hente
Both wet and wery vp they went
Into the cytye they dede
Seven yere he was palmer thore
With hunger thirft, and syghing sore
In Romaines as we rede
Ryght as he went, euen so he laye
In the myght as on the daye
In poore palmers weede
Although the flesh lyked yll
Gods wyll he woulde fulfyll
For his synfull dede
Through the cytye gan he gone
Meate nor drynke gate he none
Nor house to lodge in
Besyde the doore of Bethlem
He set hym by a well streame
Tyll the day was dymme
As he sate and sore syght
There came an aungell about mydnyght
And broughe hym bread and wyne
Then as he sayde yf ten vnto mee
Our lord hath pardon graunted to thee
Forgetten are synnes thine
Nowe telle the well of Iherusalem
Forgetten is all thy trespass
Thortly for to saye
Our Lorde is heauen kynge
Hath the gotten bys blessinge
And byddeth the turne agayne

The knight on his knees hym set
And Christ of heauen kynge he grete
Of the tydynge he was sayne
The aungell leste hym then alone
then wythe he not whyther to gone
But walked on the playne
thre kinges landes he went thorow
Tyll he came to a ryche borow
A fayre castle there stode
He herde tell there woned a quene
A fayre lady bright and thyne
and great wo;de of her yode
Every daye she made a dole
Of many florences, golde and hole
who so woulde it fetche
Lorde sayde I senbras so free
Myght I one get well were me
Eythir money or meat
whan he came to the castell gate
Many pooze folke he sawe ther at
that were come the golde to take
the quene a florence to eche one toke
Sp? I senbras it not forloke
But mery byd he make
Dooze men that myght yll go
She toke in fiftye and mo
whiche that febleste were
and in they toke sp? I senbras
wete and wery as he was
On hym they rued sore
the quene crowned at meat late

Knyght es

Knights served her there
In ryche robes of pall
A cloth on the floore was layde
this poore palmer the steward sayde
Shall sit aboue you all
Ryche meat there was brought
Stell he late and ate right nought
But looked about the hall
so muche he sawe of game and gle
where in he was wont to be
the teares he let fall
Then to a knyght the lady can saye
fetc he forth a chayre and a quillstion
and set the poore palmer therein
that he me tell maye
Of many adventures that he hath sene
In dyuers landes where he hath bene
By many a worlde waye
None the chaire was forth set
the poore palmer therein was set
and tolde her of his laye
Many martels he her tolde
then she him asked whether he woulde
Full sayne woulde she wyl
Ryche meates to hym were brought
then the quene great wonder thought
why he woulde not eat
He sayde to hym in great dysporte
O palmer be of good comforte
for nothyng that ye dreede

With

for

For his tounle that was in the Worde
I will the kinde at bed and boorde
Fayre to cloth and feede
At thyne eale thou shalt be
With much mirth game and gle
Both early and late
A clene chambr and a fayre
and a man to serue thee
Within the castle gate
For I senbras also knell
On knees before that lady fell
And sayde comely quene
Here vnto I graunt weie
Of my pardon the halfe deale
In places where I haue bene
Thus the palmer dwelled there
till that he was hole in fere
And settyd in the hall
He was so fayre and hye
that other had at hym enuy
And strong he was with all
A turnement there was byd
They hoised hym on a fayre stede
and he conquered them all
Certaynely as I you saye
Many a carolyne be new that daye
Under the castle walle
When that he came to the felde
None was so bolde vnder thynde
That durst abyde his strength
some he gaue luche a stroke certayne

Other some he made sore blede
Some he caste ouer the lake
Of some both necke and backe he make
They fled from hym for drede
The ladye seing that fast lough
And sayde my palmer is strong ynough
And worthy for to ryde
So it befell vpon a daye
For I senbias wente hym to playe
As it was his kynde
In herons nesse he sawe on hye
A redde clothe therein he se
Dewing with the wynde
Up to the tree he canne wynde
Hys owne mantell he founde therein
Hys golde there can he fynde
When he se the reade golde
Wherfore hys ladye was folde
Then was he woode of mynde
He golde into the chambze he bare
Under his heade he putte it there
Then wepyng he went a waye
Euer when he the golde can se
Hys songe was well alwaye
Were he neuer of chere so good
Whan he in hys chamber yode
After he wepte all the daye
So longe he ledde there hys lyfe
Amonge hys sarasyns that were ryfe
Then to the quene they can saye

Unto hys chamber wente this knyght
Soze wepinge as I wene
Foure knyghtes brake the chamber doze
And founde the golde in the floze
and tolde it to the quene
Besyde the quene the golde was broughte
For whiche the Sowdan her bought
Of syr Ilenbras
Though it against hys wyll were
the sendale also sawe she there
That her lordes was
when she the sendale sawe with sight
Chryse lowned that lady bryght
For she before it had sene
Often she syghed and sayde alas
this ought a knyght syr Ilenbras
That my lord was wont to be
Unto the knyght there she tolde
How that she for golde was solde
Her lord was beaten there
where ye maye the palmer se
Byd hym come and speke with me
ther to me longeth soze
The palmer came into the hall
Unto counsell he byd hym call
and asked hym right there
How that he the golde wan
And whethet he were a gentelman
and in what countre he was borne
with carfull harte and rewfull cheare

He gaue her quene to his amytie
On knees her before
The first tale that he her tolde
Whadane therfore my wyfe was solde
I do you to vnderstande
Thre chyldezen haue I lore
My mantell was a waye boze
In a nestle it founde
Tho had the lady great solace
She fell in towynge, so saynt she was
When they together met
there was myrth to se them mete
With clippynge and kissing swete
In armes for to folde
Eythre of other was so fayne
they wolde it no longer layne
To the knyghtes they it tolde
A ryche bydale byd they byd
Both riche and poore theyther prede
woulde none them selfe with holde
Byr Henbras was rayed ryght
and crowned kynge, that erre was knyght
With a gaye garlande of golde
than was kynge syr Henbras
Of more welth then euer he was
Thre landes had he there
his chrystendome he can kyth
And sent sondes frely spch
to them that heathen were
The heathen were at one assente

who that to his counsaill went
at hem to hange or brenne
They sayde that what man to hym wende
shoulde thynke his waye yll be spente
None woulde come to hym than
a daye of battayle there was set
where both Christen and Heathen met
Sy: I senbras to flo
After sarasins gan they sente
They cursed lawes for to defende
there came Heathen knynges two
sy: I senbras made hym pare
Agaynst the sarasins for to fare
with hym there was no mo
when he was armed on his fiede
hys folke hym sayled at his nede
And fast fled hym fro
sy: I senbras curtoyle and kene
Oke by pleauue of hys quene
And after syghed full soze
He loked on her with epen graye
And sayd madame haue good dare
for now and euer more
The ladye sayd vnto the knight
I woulde I were in armure bright
with you that I myght fare
If god woulde the grace sende
That we myght together kende
then gone were all my care
None was the lady dyghte
In armure as she were a myghte

On

Whiche with pence and hyelde
Agaynst thyr thousand Saracins and mo
Of christen came but thep two
Alone into the fye
He sawe them semble as I you sawe
With bandes bright and banners gaye
He howed and behelde
That cursed people false of saye
Towarde hym made great araye
With weapon and with hyelde
And he howed on a hyl
Bugles blasse and trumpettes thyl
and herauldes herd he shoute
They sayde stay our stande thou syl
Toward knight we shall the kyl
thou mayest well drede for doue
Quod Ilenbras I make a vowe
Unto my lordeswete Iesu
I shall not fele this fyghe
whyle I maye in syrope stande
With hearme on head, and speare in hande
With bronde that is so bryght
The ladye swoz by mary mylde
Againste the saracins that were so wyld
She woulde do her myghte
This daye to battayle wyl I leace
Helme on head, with hyelde and speare
To comforted she that knight
for Ilenbras his course toke with delyte
And about hym fiercely can smyte
As a warpoure wood and wyght

11
Some they herdes he byd or myght
The Sowdan was out of his myght
When he saw that syght
Through the hofte then let he crye
What man myght with mastrie
To grounde him fell doune
He shoulde him geue hys landes truly
fro Jaffa to Alexandrie
Both cite, towre and towne
Of all the whole Sowdans hofte
Was there none that durst make boaste
Battayle hym to byd
they gaue the Sowdan counsell all
Thy hole hofte at once let on hym fall
And strike hym doune and hys fiede
the Sowdan did therto assente
with bastes, and with bowes bente
They felle at him can laye
By Jherusalem good liuerie lente
the quene a swerde in her hand bent
And dealete her dole that daye
that daye that ladye and the knyght
Agaynst the Sowdan helde stronge fyght
through grace that God them sente
Of freshe Sarasins there came a route
That beset the knyght aboute
with bastes and bowes bente
Ryght as they slayne shoulde haue be
There came rydyng krynges thre
On beastes that were wylte
One on a Leopard, and one on a Unicorn

And one a Lion, one came before
They: eldest sonne to beate
the knyghtes fought as they were wode
And slewe all that before them stode
Great wonder it is to se
The heathen knyghtes slewe the there
the Saracyns that counted were
A hurtye thousand and thre
Syr: Isenbras them prayed thare
that they wolde with hym fare
All nyght with hym to be
father they sayde with milde entente
the grace of God vs better sente
Thyne othe sonnes we be
we ne wylt howe we hyther came
But for to saue you fro shame
As goddes wyl was
ye be our mother that vs bare
And ye our father sothly are
When call you Syr: Isenbras
they sayde make we ioyfull cheare
To our chyldren that we set ere
Our welth beginneth to walke
In a chamber fayre and bright
Theit atyre was comely dight
In many a worthy wede
They lacked no maner of thyng
Golde, syluer, nor ryche clothinge
they had all thyng at nede
The land after they dyd wyne
And chyldrened all that was therein.

in his day as we see
Than was kynge by Alenbras
Of more welth then ever he was
And come out of his care
To every sonne he gatte a lande
And crowned hym kynge with his hande
Whyle they together were
The eldest sonne was in surrye
Chosen chiefe of Chyualrye
As kynge and gouernoure
The seconde sonne shortly to saye
In an Ile called Iallare
Reygned with great honour
The yongest brother was crowned kynge
Of Calabre without leasynge
Thus reygned they all thre
And when it pleased God of hys myght
they all departed in heauens lyght
To the whiche byng vs the trinitie
Amen, amen, for charitie.

Finis.

Imprynted at London, by me
Wylliam Copland.



